

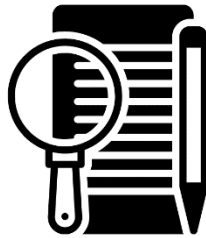


Defining Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is more than just thinking. It involves a deeper level of thinking that goes beyond our everyday basic thoughts. To think critically means to question ideas and conclusions, by analyzing, assessing and reconstructing concepts. Critical thinking helps you to determine which actions are necessary to create the best solution to your problems. A critical thinker does not accept facts at face value; instead, they analyze these facts to gain a thorough understanding of the topic at hand. As a result, critical thinking can encourage individuals to be open-minded, and gain better control over their own learning.

Thinking critically includes asking questions, including:

- What is happening?
- Why is this important?
- Who is saying this?
- How do I know?
- What other possibilities exist?



Observation

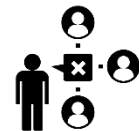
As humans, we are constantly observing the world around us. Observation provides us with a clearer vision, and can direct us to the right path to identify and solve problems. To begin an analytical process, it is necessary to observe your surroundings. A great critical thinker will have a keen sense of observation; they will listen attentively, and notice minute details in both verbal and nonverbal communication cues. Observation begins the critical thinking process by identifying the problem, its significance, and who might be involved. A critical thinker will ask questions to acquire a deeper understanding of a problem or argument, including *“What is the problem?”* and *“Why do we need to solve it?”*

Great observation skills can help to:

- Foresee problems before they occur



- Detect fallacies others may have ignored



- Recognize opportunities for growth and improvement

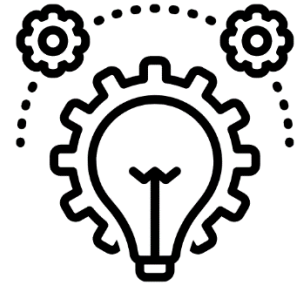


- Create solutions that had otherwise gone unnoticed

Curiosity

A core trait of critical thinkers, as well as many successful leaders is *curiosity*. A critical thinker will be curious about the world and their surroundings. This includes maintaining an open mind and continuously gaining a deeper knowledge. Curiosity is a driving force of critical thinking and the unlocking of possible solutions. It encourages us to ask questions such as “*Why is it that way?*”, or “*How does that work?*” A curious individual will have a question for almost anything, as a means of seeking truth.

A curious mind will examine situations from various perspectives. Curiosity is all about wondering about alternatives, which involves appreciating other beliefs, viewpoints or cultures that are not the same as their own. In general, a critical thinker will have broad interests and be curious about diverse topics.



Consider Clarifying Questions

If you're looking to get the right answers, it's important to ask the right questions. Clarifying questions are thought-provoking questions that will help the thinker acquire more information and get a better understanding of the overall problem.

Although these questions can be simple questions of fact, they help to obtain valuable knowledge that will eliminate any confusions or misunderstandings. With clarifying questions, you can expect other questions to arise out of the answers you receive. Consider asking the speaker to elaborate on a message, or confirm or deny what was understood by the information. Clarifying questions can help one another truly listen to what is being said.

Examples of clarifying questions include:

- Could you elaborate on this?
- What would be another way that you could do this?
- What resources did you use?
- What was meant when you said this?



Review All Possibilities

Once a possible solution has been derived, problem solvers may feel they can proceed with the solution. However, they should not overlook the all-important step of evaluating all possible solutions. Sometimes one problem has more than one solution, and taking the time to evaluate the efficacy of each alternative is a critical thinking skill. The critical thinker should evaluate each alternative and judge which one is the best.

The following steps are an effective evaluation technique:

1. Make a T-chart to weigh the pros and cons of each possible solution.
2. Develop criteria (or requirements) and assign weights to each criterion.
3. Prioritize the criteria.
4. Rate the proposed solutions using the criteria.

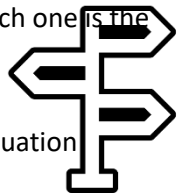


TABLE OF CONTENTS

Module One: Getting Started

- Course Objectives
- Pre-Assignment
- Pre-Test
- Action Plan Form
- Evaluation Form

Module Two: Understanding Critical Thinking

- Defining Critical Thinking
- Importance of a Critical Approach
- When to Think Critically
- The Role of Logic
- Applying Reason
- Practical Illustration
- Module Two: Review Questions

Module Three: The Critical Thinking Process

- Observation
- Analysis
- Inference
- Communication
- Problem Solving
- Practical Illustration
- Module Three: Review Questions

Module Four: The Benefits

- Increases Happiness
- Better Decision Making
- Improved Communication
- Develop the Power of Persuasion
- Fosters Team Building
- Practical Illustration
- Module Four: Review Questions

Module Five: Characteristics of a Critical Thinker

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Discipline
- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Humility
- Practical Illustration
- Module Five: Review Questions

Module Six: Improving Your Skills (I)

- Practice Active Listening
- Ask Questions
- Break Down the Problems
- Be Mindful of Emotions
- Think For Yourself
- Practical Illustration
- Module Six: Review Questions

Module Seven: Improving Your Skills (II)

- Visual Mapping
- Keep an Open Mind
- Get Involved
- Participate in Games
- Improving Sleep Quality
- Practical Illustration
- Module Seven: Review Questions

Module Eight: Evaluating the Information

- Avoid Assumptions
- Watch out for the Bias
- Consider Clarifying Questions
- SWOT Analysis
- Review All Possibilities
- Practical Illustration
- Module Eight: Review Questions

Module Nine: The Barriers

- Time and Pressure
- Insufficient Knowledge
- Close-Minded
- Drone Mentality
- Groupthink Mentality
- Practical Illustration
- Module Nine: Review Questions

Module Ten: Changing Your Perspective

- Alter Your Point of View
- Be Objective
- Thinking in Reverse
- Consider the Consequences
- Identify Inconsistencies
- Practical Illustration
- Module Ten: Review Questions

Module Eleven: Putting It All Together

- Stages of Development
- Think About Your Thinking
- Reflect and Learn from Mistakes
- Remember Your Goals
- Think, But Don't Overthink
- Practical Illustration
- Module Eleven: Review Questions

Module Twelve: Wrapping Up

- Words from the Wise
- Lessons Learned

Link to Course: [Critical Thinking](#)

Human Skills Development

Learn online at your place and time!

- Convenient: Available anytime, anywhere
- Ease of Use: Click away and get the knowledge you need.
- Flexible: Stop and continue on your schedule, at your pace.
- Cost-Effective: Online courses can save up to 70% of training expenses.
- Quality courses designed by education experts.

Human Skills Development

980 Route 730

Scotch Ridge, NB E3L 5L2

506-467-6972

Technical and course support: jamest@humanskillsdevelopment.ca